



OMEN

Table of Contents

For the first issue in the 32nd Volume of the Omen on February the seventh in the Year of our Lord 2009.

Section Hate	
Win a Date With David Axel Kurtz.....	4
Axel Resartus.....	5
Omnibus Condemnation.....	7
Lindsay in Germany.....	7
Section Speak	
Peace in Northampton.....	8
Quotebook.....	8
On SJP, Discourse, and Hampshire.....	10

Authored, in order, by Kurtz, Kurtz, Silberman, Barbieri, Nonemaker, Kurtz, and Torpey.



To Submit:

Submissions are due on alternating Saturdays before 5 P.M. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, zergling, or email. Get your submissions to Evan Silberman, Prescott 102E, box 1394, ejs07@hampshire.edu.

There is no Omen quote this week because for the life of me I can't remember anybody saying anything remotely funny while I was down here.

Front Cover:

Shamelessly stolen from Shephard Fairey

Back Cover:

Shameless advertising

Layout & Editing STAFF

Evan Silberman	TRAINS
Alex Wenchel	TRAINS
Tatiana Soutar	TRAINS
Arielle Soutar	TRAINS
Zaidee Everett	TRAINS
Sophie Lembeck	TRAINS
Morganne Kraines	TRAINS
Bethany Lowe	TRAINS
Ananda Valenzuela	TRAINS

o m e n . h a m p s h i r e . e d u

Volume 32 • Issue 1

February 6, 2009

EDITORIAL

Hope

by Evan Silberman

My friends, I write to you at the dawn of a new era. An era of hope. An era of change. An era of dinosaurs. An era of steam trains. An era of little minty chocolates left on your pillow. But mostly hope. Because I am now the editor-in-chief of The Omen.

I will pause here to accept your wild applause and adulations. Thank you.

Now that Lindsay Barbieri, your shiftless and underachieving editor of last semester, has packed up and shipped off to Germany, allegedly to study abroad but more likely to get really drunk in beer halls and sample some local sausage (if you know what I mean [I mean penises]), I'm basically the only jerk left over here dedicated enough to keep churning this thing out two times a month. But I don't resent my new role, not at all. I take on the mantle of Omen editorship seriously, and with due dedication to the rights and responsibilities the job confers. Specifically, the right to come down to this lonely underground office and make this thing, and the responsibility to not fuck up, lest past Omen editors hunt me down and steal some critical internal organs.

I'm going to begin my administration by reaffirming the Omen's policy, which is printed below for your perusal.

Though the wording has changed slightly over the years, to reflect the stylistic tendencies of the editors, the objective of the Omen remains the same: to print every single fucking submission we receive. God willing, we're going to keep doing that until the college burns down. (Ralph will play fiddle.) Because the Omen is, and always has been, made up of the voices of people.

It's not The Voice Of The People, because there's no such thing as The People. Hampshire College does not speak with one voice. Nobody speaks for everybody, and nobody should presume to. Every article in the Omen is written by a real person on this campus, a person with a name. Nothing in the Omen hides behind a group, a cause, an alias, a petition, a faceless movement, a purported Voice Of The People. It's just you, you and people like you, getting up on the stump the Omen provides and sharing their own thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, rants, jokes, loves, and hates. Defenseless and honest, our submitters are doing their best to make themselves heard, in their own fashion, in a community where being loud and obnoxious tends to be the first resort of many.

So, as I embark on the first semester of my editorship, I deliver the traditional Omen greeting: **fuck you!** (The Omen loves you.)

Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited,

and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. Your submission must include your real name: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Saturday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Fridays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

The Omen Haiku

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)

SECTION HATE

Win a Date With David Axel Kurtz: A Conclusion by David Axel Kurtz

Good afternoon, dear friends, dear well-wishers, dear ill-wishers!

To begin with, I should like to thank all of you who crafted submissions to the cause of winning a date with David Ax... that is to say, me. I have rarely if ever had so much fun having people try to go out with me. If only people knew that the way to a man's heart was through highly-publicized entreaties to lovemaking... there'd be a lot fewer single people, I think.

This issue of *The Omen* was certainly amongst the highlights of my last semester. Although it also caused some problems. Somehow a copy of the WADWDK issue made it back to my hometown last December. It got there a few days ahead of me. I discovered this one night when I was sitting in a bar near the waterfront around 1 in the morning, and some guys I had not seen since the sixth grade came stumbling over to me, drunk as Lords, asking me who I was going to go on a date with. My 8th grade English teacher called me up to weigh in. This girl I dated when she was 14 made fun of me for two hours over bubble tea. My aunt taped an issue to the hood of her car. Et cetera.

But on the other hand, these also had some good ramifications too. The drunk guys at the bar bought me so much Allagash White that I think I may have got home by magic carpet. My old English teacher and I ended up going sledding together for like three hours. My ex-girlfriend and I went sex toy shopping and she ended up grabbing me and making out with me in front of a rack of giant strap-ons. One of them was black rubber and was shaped like one of the Easter Island heads. It did not look like the kind of thing that I would want in any of my orifices, even those that I do not have much experience in possessing.

But enough obfuscation. Let's get down to business.

1) BREVIK - However much I do like hippie chicks, I'm afraid that Kerrigan's dreads have a little bit too much, uh,

volume for my taste. Perhaps if she switched shampoos. Also, I do not associate with people who are that friendly with Jurassic Park. Jurassic Park has velociraptors. How can I ever marry Randall Munroe if I am surrounded by velociraptor-philas? So thank you for playing, O Morbid One, but I'm afraid no date for you. I may however play D&D with you, if Bera stops making fun of a half-awake Krellenstein long enough to roll me a character sheet.

2) ELIZABETH - I am really quite frightened by how well you seem to know me. Especially considering the fact that I think the last time we met was my first year, when I was drunk-sitting Niall during one of his all-Dakin jogathons. That was the night that I discovered he was the world's best drunk. I remember it well.

However, I would like to commend you on your exceptionally perspicacious penetrations into my twisted, twisted psyche. I can only construe that you've actually been reading what I put in the *Omen* (no, don't disabuse me of this notion - I will treasure it unobstructed and unsullied!). Just like your query about The Soames Club - I'm afraid it's the first I've heard anyone so much as mention that blighted venture in years. The answer is that it died due to lack of interest. Rather like my first novel. FUCK ALL LITERARY AGENT'S RIGHT IN THE AMPERSAND.

Yet in conclusion, I am afraid I cannot in good conscience go out on a date with someone who has so deeply parted the mysteries of my mind. It would be too eerie. And besides, would we have to talk about? By the end of the soup course I'd already be reduced to a small pile of quaking Jell-O, curiously molded to look like a slightly rotund Jewish liberal-arts student. And we couldn't have that.

So we'll just have to hang out without all the cherubim floating around. Alas. But let's hang out. You can get me drunk and ask me about FUCKING LITERARY AGENT'S. Or some other topic of conversation not quite so rage-in-

spiring.

3) DANSON AND ALLEN - I really can't find the words. Except to say that I am glad I will come back to my 20-year reunion to still be known as The Lolcat Guy. I ought to have hate, yes? But I can't because you are too talented in your photoshopping of my ridiculous facebook pictures. So I have love. Ceiling Kurtz reigns!

That being said, I really can't date both of you at once. I would just get confused. Also, both of you are away this semester, and that would just be a lonely date. So I will just have to owe you each a massive hug for your artistic accomplishments. And you must also buy me cheeseburgers. Dude, seriously - let's go out for cheeseburgers. OH SWEET IRONY! and... MEAT!

4) CLEMENTE - We are both hairy and jolly. And we do both like cheese. What are you doing Friday night?

and I can't actually tell if other people submitted, due to the way *The Omen* is formatted. So if anyone else wants, bring me pie and I will consider eating said pie in exchange for romantic interludes. Cuz that's how I roll.

Axel Resartus by David Axel Kurtz

My dear Nick Drozd:

I thank you very much for your open letter, "Breaking the Axel," published in the previous semester. It is a pleasure to know that you read at least a portion of my essay "On the Pax Academia," published sometime earlier in this ominous publication of ours. I thank you for taking the time to peruse it.

Having put your eyes to my pen-strokes at all does, I think, make you a member of what I assume to be a very small club. You should get jackets made. Now.

I should tell you also that your commentary ranks as amongst the most substantive that I have yet received at this college, from student or professor either. Your criticisms were second only in power to those Evan made in an editorial last year, where he referred to me as a "masturbating old man." I am still considering my responses to that particular

investiture.

As to the specificities of your criticisms of my writing, I might only say that it is my sad duty to pull a Hexter and "completely agree" with all of your commentary. Yet in the grand tradition of our dear sweet president, my complete agreement is not the conclusion of my argument.

Your primary criticism of my essay is that I committed the sin of Parmenides, and created a subject for an argument without positing a definition thereof. I agree with Parmenides: this is a rhetorical sin of the first order. For, as Roger Cotes so astutely stated in his introduction to the second edition of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, "He who assumes hypotheses as first principles for his arguments may form an ingenious romance, but a romance it shall remain." Or words to that effect.

I should take a moment to say that I found it very funny that you attributed this sin to a nineteenth-century German philosopher, rather than to the third-century-BC Greek I named above. In fact, this latter Deutschlandic chappy was not the one who proposed this rhetorical deviation to be worthy of disdain. He was, in fact, the philosopher who finally solved the difficulty of Parmenides' Nominative Paradox, by suggesting that such reification must only be excluded from a logical argument when it existed only as a predicate nominative, not as a subject. Therefore, to use the example which I believe was that of Parmenides, the phrase "Unicorns exist," while false, is still valid; whereas the phrase "The existence of Unicorns is false" is invalid, allowing for the possibility of one-horned wonders galloping around every which way.

I cannot however use this argument in defense of my essay. My essay did not proffer a term without definition. My essay proffered a definition without a term associated. I cannot be accused of overzealous reification if no reification in fact took place. A sort of habeas corpus of lexicography, if you will.

The first few paragraphs of my essay attempted to provide the characteristics of a general sort of person. It is entirely my judgment that those who possess these characteristics ought to be grouped together into a 'sort' at all. The dichotomization is mine. Therefore, in order to argue that the dichotomization ought to exist, I must first present evidence therefore. Else my case shall collapse around me, and what sort of a prosecutor of postmodernism would I be?

I begin by suggesting a form of logical construct, namely

the exhortatory *reductio ad confundum* proposed by the dear former Member for Bristol. I then demonstrate that there is an alteration of this syllogism currently extant, and employed with regularity by certain people. I define this alteration, its manner of employ, and the sort of people who employ it.

I then define this group of people, in two entire paragraphs devoted thereunto. Firstly I provide names which they commonly self-apply, or with which they are commonly invested:

These schools have a variety of names, given both by those who observe their philosophical tenants and by those who observe the observers. They include but are not limited to Post-Modernism, Post-Structuralism, Deconstructionism, existential relativism, neo-Marxism, Derridaism (&c), Frankfurt Scholasticism (&c), and most monopolistically of all, Critical Theory.

Thereafter I attempt to provide my own overarching definition for what I see as common trends within all these subgenres of pretension:

For the purposes of this paper the author will use a single term to denote such groups as are so defined by their dogmatic maintenance of an absence of aesthetic principles. He proposes, for the sake of ease, "Smeagol." It seems a fitting utterance.

Your objection, then, is not one based upon a criticism of logic. Rather it is aesthetic in nature. You think my writing is poor because I introduced a substantive definition before I provide an object for that definition. You find this, I expect, rambling. You find it difficult to follow. You find it, in short, bad writing.

This, dear Sir, is good fucking criticism.

I have returned to the essay, and I find your suggest as to how to better my essay somewhat hard to practicably enforce. This mainly due to the error of syllogistic form which was the basis of your aforementioned Breaking of my Axels, wherein a term ought not to precede its definition. I would hate to be guilty of the sin of Parmenides, and introduce a word without giving it either denotation or connotation for it to be fully understood, even within the context of the essay alone.

For I do believe that the great effect of a generation reared under the educational mandate of these Smeagol-like personages is going to be, if only to me, highly disappointing. (I could herein employ a few choice extended metaphors,

full of classical illusions, to illustrate my point. But I think I've done that enough for one lifetime. Just understand that it will piss me off royally and drive me, in opposition, to the producing of *even more prose*. Put that in your pipe and fuck it!)

Let me say, then, that I am very glad that you took the time to read my piece. Moreover that I am quite grateful to you for making this reader's commentary, and, though I find it somewhat hard to work, for even going to far as to prescribe a solution thereto. I shall certainly take The Pax Academia to task, and see if I can't incorporate your feedback into the next draft. Perhaps if I am feeling particularly giddy, I will then publish the new draft between the stapled-on covers of this magical magazine of ours. If nothing else, this is sure to make Evan cry into his bottle of bawls.

Very Sincerely:

david "Axel d'Auersperg" kurtz

Omnibus Condemnation by Evan Silberman

So, fuck the following things, lately:

Myself, for apparently not promoting the Omen well enough to have reliable co-editors, much less any submissions from people other than Kurtz and Torpey, modulo Flarnie's subission. I was looking at some ca. 1999 issues from the archives, and while the issues I looked at seemed to be fairly saturated with the submissions of just a core group, at least the core group consisted of more than two or three people, and these things that they wrote may actually have gotten read by some people. Unlike, I suspect, the things that David writes. Because seriously I know you don't read that shit.

All of you, for not submitting to the Omen. I'm not going to be happy until every issue is forty pages.

Israel and Palestine and SJP and pretty much everyone else who has ever said anything about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, because all of you are insensitive clods.

My glasses, for breaking.

Ice, for making it fucking deadly to escape from Prescott. (Yes, I live in Prescott. Oh well. At least I don't live in the Yurt. [I bet you don't even remember that the Omen has a vendetta against the Yurt, because this place is really short on tradition lately. Lefton is gone, and seriously there are not enough old Omen people. It's just me. There are pretty much no other Omen people. Why don't you come to Omen layout sometime? Bring a laptop, help make this thing shine again. Layouts are sort of intermittent, but if you sign up for the Omen mailing list {omen@lists.hampshire.edu} you'll find out about them.]

The Internet, for being terrible and a massive timesink.

Myself, for being lazy and typing out stupid bullshit like this to fill the pages of the Omen instead of writing an essay or a column or something that someone might actually find interesting to read.

Time, for marching along and making me twenty (20) years old as of a few hours from the time I am writing this. Seriously, 20? How can I be fucking 20? That's just ludicrous.

Fuck, man.

Twenty.

Lindsay in Germany: A Travel Column by Lindsay Barbieri

Ten facts about my house mate:

1. I have seen no evidence thus far to make me believe he has a job.
2. His apartment is a fairly large down-town in a cool neighborhood city apartment with a total of six large rooms and two bath rooms.
3. Two of these rooms are almost entirely empty. A third room was entirely empty but is now my room. (Actually, the whole apartment is pretty empty. Except for mirrors. There is one wall-sized huge ornate mirror and at least a half dozen other large mirrors.)
4. He plays techno beat music all day and night, loudly, even when he is not around.
5. He gets American channels on his TV special. He is also American, but he has lived here for eight years.
6. He told me where and how to get drugs the first day I was here.
7. The second day he told me he was having several Brazilian girls over from a club to have a photo shoot. I asked if he was a photographer and he said no.
8. He has a LOT of alcohol in the house. His desk looks like a giant bar, not a mini bar.
9. He told me I could pretty much have the bathroom closest to my room to myself. He said, "I don't usually use it anyways just when..." pause "well, the bathtub is bigger."
10. His wireless network is called "EAT PUSSY IT'S XMASS"

Lindsay is studying in Berlin, Germany this semester. As far as she can tell Berlin is made of really old buildings, really new buildings, really ruined buildings, cobblestones, sidewalks, canals, parks, smoke and graffiti. Lots of graffiti.

SECTION SPEAK

Peace in Northampton by Flarnie Nonemaker

Josh and I were walking around Northampton, and we had just been talking about how to react to the many people on the street playing music or just asking for change. I suggested that when someone asks for money, we ask what they want it for and if they need food or clothing we just give them that. Just then we passed a man holding a bouquet of flowers who seemed to be shouting to himself about scary things. Josh nodded at him, and he said "Don't just nod and walk past! I'm a veteran of the US Army and I need your help!" We stopped and started talking to him, asking "What do you need?" but he never asked for money! He didn't seem to be panhandling at all, he wanted to tell people how awful war is. He just wanted us to listen, and when we asked again "What should we do?" he said

"Tell people, let everyone know my message. My name is Michael, just Michael, and I want you to think, have you seen all your friends coming back from war in boxes? If you have children... can you imagine them being sent back in boxes too? It won't be long, we have to do something!" and he handed Josh a flower.

Just then an angry man came out of a nearby store, and said "Two cents of advice, it's time to move along."

"What's that?" asked the old war veteran.

"Move along."

Michael said something about having a "right to be

here".

The angry man told us that there had "been complaints" and that the "cops were on the way", so Michael moved down the street about a block. "I will get arrested," said Michael, "But let people know. Let them know why Michael is in jail."

Josh and I went to get some food, and just as we returned to the street we saw the cops pull up down the street, where Michael had been heading. Noone was there when we got to that spot, we assume they took Michael away.

I will tell people. Who knows, maybe Michael was crazy and dangerous, but if that is true I know the reason why. He had seen the end of the world, and nobody was listening to him, I think I would shout too if I had seen my classmates come back dead. Maybe they should be arresting those who sent Michael out to fight.

I will also tell people that you can get arrested for speaking your mind in public, and you can get arrested for looking shabby on the streets of Northampton, for not being rich and for speaking your mind.

There was recently an ordinance proposed that put strong restrictions on panhandling in Northampton, I didn't follow it at the time but I want to find more about what happened and how we can decriminalize poverty. ☹

Quotebook by David Axel Kurtz

Art is the only profession wherein standing next to giants will make you look taller.

Accessibility in narrative is, first of all, for those who cannot hear; second of all, for those who cannot think; and third of all, for those who cannot dream.

Sons no longer return to the field of battle to claim the bodies of their fallen fathers. One man's progress is another man's wasted progeny.

OMNIA TERRA IN PARTES UNAM DIVISA EST.
HIC PARTAM INCOLUNT HUMANAEE, ET HUMANAEE SOLAE.

Art may be defined as any thing which might be made an object to scrutiny, the results of which cannot be expressed in figures. Conversely, the study of art which confines itself purely to numerical expression, such as is often the nature of Art History studies, is simply the academic pursuit of accountancy with a mild multimedia flavoring. Yet by virtue of this limitation, its season cannot even be properly savored by those who consume it.

It was not the Horatii, but the oath, which was worthy of depiction. VAR: It's the oath that makes the Horatii.

A 'public intellectual' is a preacher without a God. An academic is a public intellectual without a flock. VAR: Public intellectual: A preacher without a frock.

Academia is a religion without a deity that has progress instead of truth. If only this cut down upon the quantity of the liturgy...

Pride cometh in recovering from the fall.

Drugs reduce a person's abilities. This is desired by many, especially those who are still in school. Their academics do not require of them their best efforts, nor very much of their time, and rarely do they prove good outlets for their abilities. The students, then, are like ships that are still under construction yet whose boilers are already lit. Or, worse, these ships are seaworthy, yet still kept on land. Do not be surprised, then, if they strain at their moorings; likewise if they try to dampen the head of steam that they have raised, by throwing a bushel or two of marijuana into the furnace. I only wonder which is healthier behavior.

One man's leitmotif is another man's leetspeak.

The development of a "sixth sense about something" is simply an abdication of responsibility towards the other five.

What thou lovest well shall assuredly be reft from thee. Or the other guy just ain't trying hard enough.

The validity of a proposition is not necessarily related to its credibility. Congruently, the quality of a work of art is never dictated by the circumstances of its creation.

Authors should not seek to develop their voice. They should seek to develop a book. And after that, if they feel it warranted, another book. The more an author finds their voice, the more their works shall sound the same, and each be as iterations in one great series that is defined, not by the characters or the settings or the deeds done within, but simply by the author's presence, by his name. The best that such an author may then hope for is that one of their books shall be more the same than the others, garnering them small fame but likewise throwing all their other works well into the background, including their subsequent efforts.

A writer who seeks to develop their voice above all shall produce writing fit for the palates of those who read writers. I myself do not read writers. I read books. Therefore my conclusions are foregone.

The highest function of postmodernism, and like academic expressions of moral relativism, is to instruct those students placed into the charge of its operators. It should teach them to reject blind dogmatism, acknowledge subjectivity, question aesthetic postulates, and just generally think about things before they declare that they believe in them and then go off and act on those beliefs. If used for this purpose it is as efficacious as tilling weeds into the soil, to allow and encourage new crops to be grown. It is the destruction from which great construction might follow; it is Hegelian synthesis made manifest.

The lowest function of postmodernism is to convert those students placed into the charge of its prelates. It then teaches them to reject all attempts to convince them as to the validity of an argument, to deny objectivity, to disregard all aesthetic postulates on principle, and just generally to

think about things to the complete exclusion of acting in any way upon those thoughts. If used for this purpose it is as wasteful as tilling crops full-grown into the soil, and then sowing that soil with salt to prevent further growth. It is destruction for the sake of destruction, and the focusing of all creative energies on the maintenance of that waste; it would make a desert and call it peace.

Artwork is to be judged upon its usefulness. If it transports in ecstasy, this is utility by supplement, for it might allow the viewer to better perform their chosen tasks during those times when they are not enraptured thereby. If it shows a thing as worth doing, or teaches how to do, this is utility by compliment, wherein the work of art is of direct use in informing the tasks chosen by the viewer. It must move one towards, the better to reach, or else move one away, the better to reach likewise.

The rest is dross.

When a person is bored, they find things to do with themselves. This even if they invent things, subconsciously, with which to challenge themselves. The more intelligent a person is, the more capable, the more focused, the more they shall be bored in a given situation. They shall therefore need more in their life to keep them occupied. They will need challenge. They will need drama.

In a collegiate atmosphere, especially one so atomized as is Hampshire, I cannot but think that the amount of drama in a person's life is directly proportional to their abilities. The more drama one deals with, the more time and energy they clearly have. Time and energy which, quite likely, would otherwise be put to no particular use. Dealing with drama might even be a better use for their energies than many of the alternatives hereabouts. Even those alternatives which are approved, accredited academically.

Granted that there are better things that one can do with one's time. But such things are fucking hard to find.

Enlightenment is the knowledge that whatever you do doesn't matter, except as you say it matters; it is the burden of postulating one's own aesthetic, against which one's own actions must be judged. Nihilism is understanding that nothing matters, and thus doing nothing; it creates the vacuum,

but abdicates the responsibility of filling it anew. Hipsterism is understanding that nothing matters, and thus doing exactly what people did, or do, who have not reached this enlightenment. This whether it be done in the style of the 1980s or the 1480s; it matters not. The end result is that the difference between the gathered disciples of Buddha, and a Dashboard concert, is really just a white belt and PBR.

There must be another sort of person. Not one who rides high on dogmatism, nor flatlines on its absence, nor chills out in the irony in the space between. Something that starts in the high jumble of darkness, lightens itself of all such things - and then slowly and painfully builds itself up something new.

It is time for a new manifesto. Because it is time for new things to be made manifest. ☹

On SJP, Discourse, and Hampshire

by Alex Torpey

Being passionate is the root of what makes Hampshire students so great. We are all so engaged and so passionate - and that passion drives us to incredible heights. However, somewhere along the way some of our community members forgot what it means to be positive, respectful and constructive.

Because there are so many passionate people on this campus, there are frequently issues that take up the entire sphere of dialog and discourse as students get concerned and vocal about them. The Israel/Palestine conflict is the best example of people vocalizing their opinions currently, but doing so in a way that leaves no room for argument, much less even for open discussion. Many of the students in SJP, though clearly passionate about this issue, use phrases and words that seem to be aimed much less at encouraging discussion and unity than they are as personal attacks, rhetoric and forwarding their own personal interests. Using phrases or words like "racist", "repulsive" and "disgusts" are not particularly great ways of disagreeing with someone, yet all of these words, in addition to being heard over the past year directed at anyone who has questioned SJP, all ap-

peared in SJP student responses to President Ralph Hexter's blog entry about the Israel/Palestine conflict. Although people should obviously feel free to disagree to what he said, Hexter's letter was certainly not "racist", nor are the people whom members of SJP have in the past described as "racist". These are words that are framed from an extremely negative perspective; they serve no constructive purpose except for alienating both the person they were directed towards and anyone who might disagree in the future. Doing that as a way of forwarding one's own cause is not what this college or progressive politics are about.

SJP is far from the only group of students I've heard speak or write like that towards other people, but rather the most recent, and one of the most extreme examples of how we have let discourse on this campus be derailed into petty personal attacks.

No less frequent to our discourse are issues of race, gender and class that so many of us care so much about. The passion involved in the vocalization of these ideas is palpable. As incredible as that passion is, these discussions on our campus end up becoming weighted down with negative emotions and rhetoric, and rarely get the full attention they deserve.

You do not help move an issue forward by calling people 'racist' or even "repulsive" for simply not completely agreeing with you. That authoritarian attitude, where disagreement is not allowed and your way of looking at things must be accepted as the ultimate, un-questionable truth is what has been oppressive in this world for centuries, if not millennia. That is the attitude that has led to so much violent oppression throughout our history - when you have a group of people who demand that everyone else blindly accepts their way of thinking purely on faith and leaves no room for argument.

I would like to issue a challenge to all the members of SJP and other student groups and community members that frame their public statements and activities in the extreme

negative. Disagree without being negative towards individual people. Describe the issues at hand instead of making personal attacks. Respond to disagreement instead of reacting. Suggest constructive ways of moving forward instead of destructive statements that move us all backwards.

The Israel/Palestine conflict needs to be discussed yet ideological extremism is stopping a real discussion from happening. The violence in that area is tragic but compounding that tragedy is letting personal interests get in the way of moving towards a discussion, and ideally a solution, to the problem. You are all so critical of national and global politics yet do the same oppressive things on this campus? Please, enough negativity. That is not the Hampshire I go to.

Let me tell you about the Hampshire I go to. I go to a school that values respect between one another. I go to a school that welcomes discourse, debate and disagreement. I go to a school that sees the benefit in these debates as a way to listen and learn from each other and progress our entire body of knowledge forward. I go to a school that cares about the opinions of every single person and the perspective that can be gained by listening. I go to a school that is focused and motivated to progress positive goals.

The Israel/Palestine conflict is one of example an issue that is of incredible importance to our generation. But right now this campus is divided. Instead of letting our passion divide us, we should be using our passion to unite us towards making this world that we live in a better place.

That is what Hampshire is to me, and those are the values that I see so many students here upholding. Those are the values that both this country and this school stand for, and those are the values that I stand for. I know there are many other students on this campus that agree - let us make the atmosphere here what it was intended to be: Positive. Respectful. Constructive. That is the Hampshire I go to, and that is the Hampshire that I will soon be a proud alumnus of. ☹

DEATHFEST

Hampshire's semesterly roleplaying
tournament, will occur on

MARCH 7TH

so mark your calendars.